



Tundra travel permits are required for vehicles traveling off-road in many tundra areas. In many cases, industry operators have tundra travel permits in place. If no permits are in place, contact the appropriate landowners and agencies, who may require anywhere from one day to 2 months to issue permits. The following agencies issue tundra travel permits:

- Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Land (state-owned land)
- North Slope Borough (Borough-owned land)
- Alaska Coastal Management Program (if site is in the coastal zone)
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (if site is near river or stream)

For state-owned land on the North Slope, the policy of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Land requires a permit for any vehicle traveling on tundra during any season. Permits are issued for either summer tundra travel (July 15 until freeze-up), winter tundra travel (freeze-up until breakup), or both. No off-road travel except for true emergencies is permitted for the period from breakup until July 15.

WINTER TUNDRA TRAVEL

In Alaska, tundra is generally open to off-road travel when the ground is frozen to a depth of 12 inches and when there is approximately 6 inches of snow on the ground. The date of tundra opening on the North Slope has ranged from as early as November 4 to as late as January 1. Once the tundra has been opened in the winter, there are no restrictions on the type of vehicles that may operate on the tundra. In years of limited snowfall, the tundra may be opened conditionally, with the stipulation that vehicles are restricted to areas where snow has drifted such that enough snow is present to prevent damage to the tundra vegetation.

Alaska North Slope tundra is closed when it appears that thawing has resulted in snow that will be too soft or too limited to permit travel without damaging vegetation. Operators are then given a 72-hour notice to move vehicles and other equipment off the tundra.

SUMMER TUNDRA TRAVEL

The Division of Land has approved use of 4-wheel all-terrain vehicles on boardwalks placed on tundra (Tactic P-4) in the summer. A permit is required for this kind of travel. The Division of Land will permit use of heavy equipment on tundra during summer months for special uses (e.g., excavating contaminated soil) on a case-by-case basis.

The following vehicles have been tested and approved by the Division of Land for summer tundra travel:

- Argo 8 1/C with smooth tracks
- Roller-driven Rolligon
- Haggland Bearcat with smooth track configuration
- Tucker Snocat with smooth track configuration
- Airboats (for use in spill drills and exercises only)

The purpose of vehicle testing is to determine which vehicles can operate on the tundra during the summer without causing damage to the vegetation. Vehicles are approved in the configuration tested; for example, a vehicle tested with a payload of 1,000 pounds is limited to that payload when operating on the tundra. A vehicle tested and approved with smooth tracks would require retesting if the vehicle is to be operated with cleats or wheels.

The following stipulations apply to all summer tundra vehicles operating on state land:

- Operations are restricted to dry uplands whenever possible.
- Crossing wetlands shall be kept to an absolute minimum.
- Crossing ponds or lakes or the wetlands immediately bordering these areas is not authorized.
- Minimum-radius turns shall be avoided where possible.
- Multiple passes over the same area shall be kept to a minimum.
- All operators shall be made familiar with arctic vegetation types to ensure compliance with these stipulations.
- The state reserves the right to limit, restrict, or require retesting of vehicles at any time.

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